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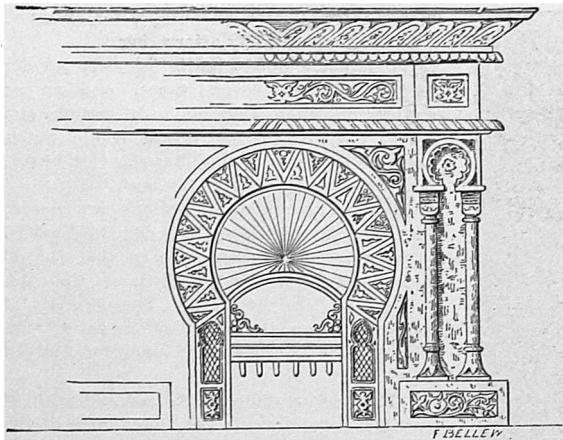
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OUR COLORED PLATE.

IN our colored plate with this issue we again show a series of designs displayed in ten colors, the colors being shown, as before, on the lower margin.

The ceilings, numbers four and five, are from German and French models, and contain a number of very useful suggestions.

The panels, figures two and three, are further illustrations of Roman conventionalizing treatment. The pieces are from the architrave of the Roman Temple at Brescia. Roman ornamentation consisted chiefly of scrolls and flowers, and not always made in the best artistic taste. The examples shown were selected because of their slight variation in the rather monotonous Roman manner. Many designers are incorporating the Roman style in their work, and it is admissible, if judiciously employed. OWEN JONES speaks rather to discourage the adoption of this form. He says: "The fatal facilities which the Roman system of decoration gives for manufacturing ornament, by applying acanthus leaves to any form and in any direction, is the chief cause of the invasion of this ornament into most modern works. It requires so little thought, and is so completely a manufacture, that it has encouraged architects in an indolent neglect of one of their especial provinces."

Figures one and two are examples of Indian work—small pieces of bordering. The Indian art owes much of its interest to the wonderful display of ingenuity in the varieties obtained by the repetition of a simple form or figure; there is a unity and harmony in their designs, a connection between all the various parts and a well-studied appropriateness to every figure; nothing is thrown in to fill up a space that is useless; every line has its distinct relation to the next, and so distinct that one cannot be removed without detracting from the general appearance. When the Indians display a flower, it is naturalistic, posed in different positions so the contour and outlines are not the only beauties displayed, but the details varying, perhaps, upon each petal.

The triangular panels, number seven and eight, are beautiful examples of the Italian Renaissance and are copied from paintings by Raphael, in the Vatican. The grotesque ornamentation is becoming popular and gives an interest and a value to examples of this sort. Raphael was the master of this particular form, and we trust it will be our privilege to give many pieces from his work. Jacques Méréault-Daussey, in his *Histoire des Beaux Arts*, says, concerning the term "grotesque:" "It is thought that this expression was first applied to the imitations that were made of the figures of imaginary animals, found in the fifteenth century in the subterranean constructions, which the Italians term *grotte*. Grotesques result from a love of the marvelous, and from an urgent longing in our nature to leave at times the human sphere and to soar away into the fairy-land of imagination. This longing is universal; it is born with man as much as poetry or thought; but, it is developed most strongly in those nations in which the elements of civilization are heterogeneous."

The slender blue and gold border, number six, is in the style of the French Renaissance, and taken originally from a well-known French work, *Heures à l'usage de Rouen*, published in 1508.

NATURE IN ART.

BY F. EDWARD HULME, F.L.S., F.S.A.

A SERIES OF ARTICLES.—No. TWO.

Egyptian art quickly reached a point when no further progress in it was possible. It became bound in the iron fetters of a rigid conventionalism imposed upon it by the priesthood, and it was flat heresy to hint at any possible modification or improvement. Certain canons were laid down and rigidly adhered to for many centuries,

and neither the representations of gods nor men might differ from the established law in attribute or proportion. No healthy growth was, therefore, possible to them within these limits, though we see by their representations of the lower animals, of dogs, birds and the like, that there was a greater artistic power in them than the art tyranny, under which they were held, would ever allow them scope for. In the art of Assyria, on the contrary, there was abundant life and liberty, and though we rarely, if ever, find it except as ministering to the pomp of the monarch, so far as it goes it is full of power. The king plunges with vengeful cruelty his javelin into the eyes of his kneeling foe, pours out libations to his gods, or engages in fierce energy in the chase, but in every case the story is admirably told. In the lion hunts we see the great savage animals creeping with stealthy



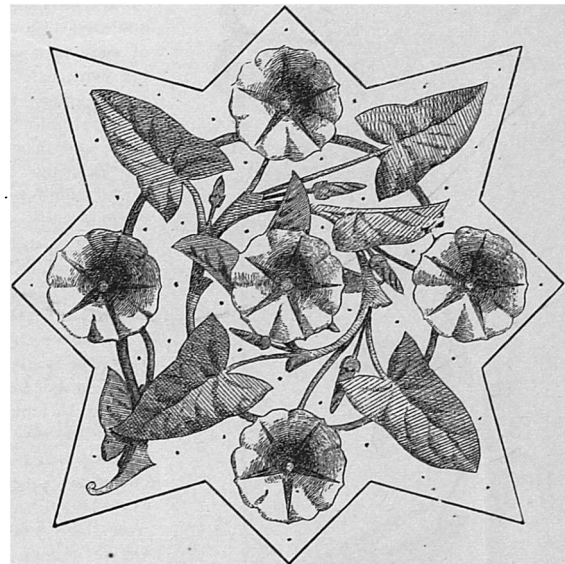
EGYPTIAN SERPENT WORSHIP.

step for the final spring, dragging their wounded bodies, arrow transfixed, along the ground, or clutching at the chariot wheels in intensity of despairing rage; while in others the relaxed limbs testify that death has ended their sufferings. A lioness that drags itself slowly along, its hinder limbs paralysed by an arrow through the spine, while it yet snarls defiance at its foes, lives especially in our memory. But the attitudes of the animals are varied in the extreme. The huge hunting dogs are also finely portrayed, animals of most ferocious aspect, and much resembling our modern mastiffs. No bear hunt of Synders or stag hunt of Landseer could give more fully the spirit and resolution of the animals, than we find them rendered in these ancient slabs, the sculptured decorations of the long buried palaces of ancient Assyria, and no other antique remains can for a moment compare with them for vigor and powerful drawing. The representations of the chase of the wild bull or the antelope are equally graphic. The difference between the sculptors of Egypt and Assyria, between Thebes and Kouyunjik, lies in this—that the one is the symbol of art stifled and bound by arbitrary restrictions, while the other is the expression of art free to do its uttermost, and ever seeking its inspiration where alone it should be sought, not in rules and formulas, but in the presence of living nature. The Egyptian art undoubtedly attained to a certain stately dignity of repose, while the Assyrian, in trying for much more than this, naturally made some failures; but even the failures of honest endeavor are worth more than the successes of self complacency, and we reiterate that the one was art-death, while the other was art-life.

In Europe, the medieval period shows us an art as grand, possibly, in some respects as any the world has ever seen, though it has been branded with the name of Gothic. In painting, the schools of Western Europe must bow before the intensity of devotion of Fra Angelico, the quaint beauty of Giotto, the grand drawing of Michel Angelo, the grace of Raphael, and the glowing color of Titian, Paulo Veronese and many another noble name that shines as a star in the diadem of sea-girt Venice. We refer now to the sculpture so lavishly introduced in the noble municipal buildings scattered broadcast over Northern Europe, as at Brussels, Louvain or Courtrai; and on the venerable cathedrals and abbeys that rise high above the picturesque carved houses of Rouen, the sordid squalor of Westminster, or the clustering woods and flowing streams of the abbeys of Tintern or Fountains; grand old piles, whatever their surroundings, as they throw their lichened towers and gables skyward, and stand like some grey rock amidst the eddying life around them. Fine as the architecture is, the sculpture is fully worthy of it, when we bear in mind the limitations under which it was produced. The Greeks had, beneath their sunny skies, and in the public games, countless opportunities of acquiring a knowledge of the human form, which were not available to the men of the north. The material,

too, in which the medieval sculptors worked, had not the hardness of the Greek marble, and the fingers of Time have left their mark upon it. In cities, too, the corroding influence of the sulphur resulting from the continuous combustion of coal is a great foe to all external work, and the rains and frosts of each recurring winter have exerted their influence for evil. The iconoclastic zeal of the puritan and of the excursionist have not been expended, either, without result, and all these untoward influences must be taken into consideration, when we ask our readers to admire with us some possibly featureless or headless statue. Some of the Gothic work is an offence to all good taste, but it rarely deliberately defiles itself and becomes a shame to its makers, as some old Pompeian work and some modern French work does, while it is often delightfully quaint, and at times rises to a grandeur and dignity worthy of the highest regard, and the most careful study. Some of the figures, for example, of kings, confessors and saints, in the great west portals of Rheims, or occupying the multitudinous niches in Wells, are as perfect in grace and conception as the mind can imagine, while for appreciation of lower forms of beauty almost any Gothic building of any rank at all, may be profitably searched, the panels of wild rose or hedge-nuts, the wreathed capitals of bryony and buttercups, and many another form of lowly grace testifying to the old carvers' delight in the floral wealth around them.

What, then, is the practical lesson that we would draw? Briefly this, an intense appreciation and reverence for the beauty of nature. Tried by this standard, we hesitate not to say that the art of such a man as the Englishman, William Hunt, in its homely simplicity, the altogether admirable painting of a hedge sparrow's nest and a spray of flowery hawthorn, is a nobler thing than all the frivolities of fashionable life painted by a Watteau or a Lancret.



CONVOLVULUS DESIGN.

Whatever, then, may be the conflicting claims on our regard, as we study the dicta of this or that authority, we would venture to say that the greatest authority of all is fair Nature herself, and that all the noblest decorative art is simply the expression of man's delight in the beauty spread so lavishly around him. This is not necessarily a merely slavish copy of her forms, for there is such a thing as a misplaced naturalism of treatment, and therefore such a thing as a laudable conventionalism. Art should thankfully accept the aid of nature, and adapt her beauties to its varying purposes; the degree of that adaptation we shall hope to show hereafter. We see, too, in the works of Nature certain broad principles of symmetry, contrast and adaptation of means to ends, and these we may advantageously study and reflect in our own work. Into these details we propose to enter in the following papers, and to give such illustrations, verbal and pictorial, as may be necessary to set forth our views. There is a conventionalism founded on ignorance, and a nobler adaptation based on knowledge, and the purpose of our opening paper is served if we have succeeded in awakening in our readers a sense of the truth of our opening proposition, or have, at least, incited them to think it over.

The first illustration deals with serpent worship as represented in an Egyptian painting, the other is a design of our own, based on the small convolvulus, giving the natural forms yet arranging the whole in a somewhat conventional manner.

Why not organize an historical furniture and carpet exhibition in New York? It would be of considerable interest, and just now as we have succeeded in getting a genuine Raphael painting into the country, we might hope for a Riesener or Boule.

This Colored Plate contains Ten Colors, as shown by the diagram on the lower margin. The plate that will accompany our next number will contain Four Colors. Our purpose in thus varying the number of colors used, is that we may present designs of moderate as well as highly finished character, affording opportunity for decoration of different values.

With our February number will be given (in place of our Colored Plate) Four full pages of "Studies," which will be reproductions of the best designs of the kind that we can find. The original of this collection of studies would cost more to buy in the "Art" stores, than a subscription to our paper for two years or more.

We shall be thankful for suggestions from interested persons.

